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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: STATEMENT ON DEPORTATION  
OF NORWEGIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

11. Post is authorized to make the following statement at the  
October 16, 2008, meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in  
Vienna:

Begin Text:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins Norway and the EU in expressing its  
concern about recent actions taken by Kyrgyz authorities  
against Mr. Ivar Dale, the representative of the Norwegian  
Helsinki Committee in Bishkek.

According to the OSCE Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyz law  
enforcement officials on October 12th denied Mr. Dale entry  
into Kyrgyzstan at Bishkek's airport without providing any  
official explanation. Mr. Dale was told that he would be  
banned entry into Kyrgyzstan for a period of ten years.

This incident follows a series of actions targeted at the  
Norwegian Helsinki Committee by Kyrgyz authorities, including  
a June 9th raid of the Committee's office and an  
administrative case brought against Mr. Dale this summer.  
Actions of this nature lead to an environment of fear and  
mistrust for non-governmental organizations and other  
international organizations operating in Kyrgyzstan. It is  
important for the democratic development of all participating  
States that Kyrgyzstan that civil society be allowed to  
function freely. We all agreed to provide opportunities for  
increased involvement of NGOs in OSCE activities as  
foreseen in Chapter IV of the Helsinki Document of 1992, and  
is hard to see how this decision is in accordance with the  
spirit of that commitment. and that NGO representatives be  
granted the visas to work within the country.

We urge Kyrgyzstan to reconsider this step, and join us in a  
commitment to provide to the OSCE an explanation for the  
deportation of Mr. Dale, and to ensure that NGOs are allowed  
to operate openly and conduct their peaceful work without  
intimidation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
RICE